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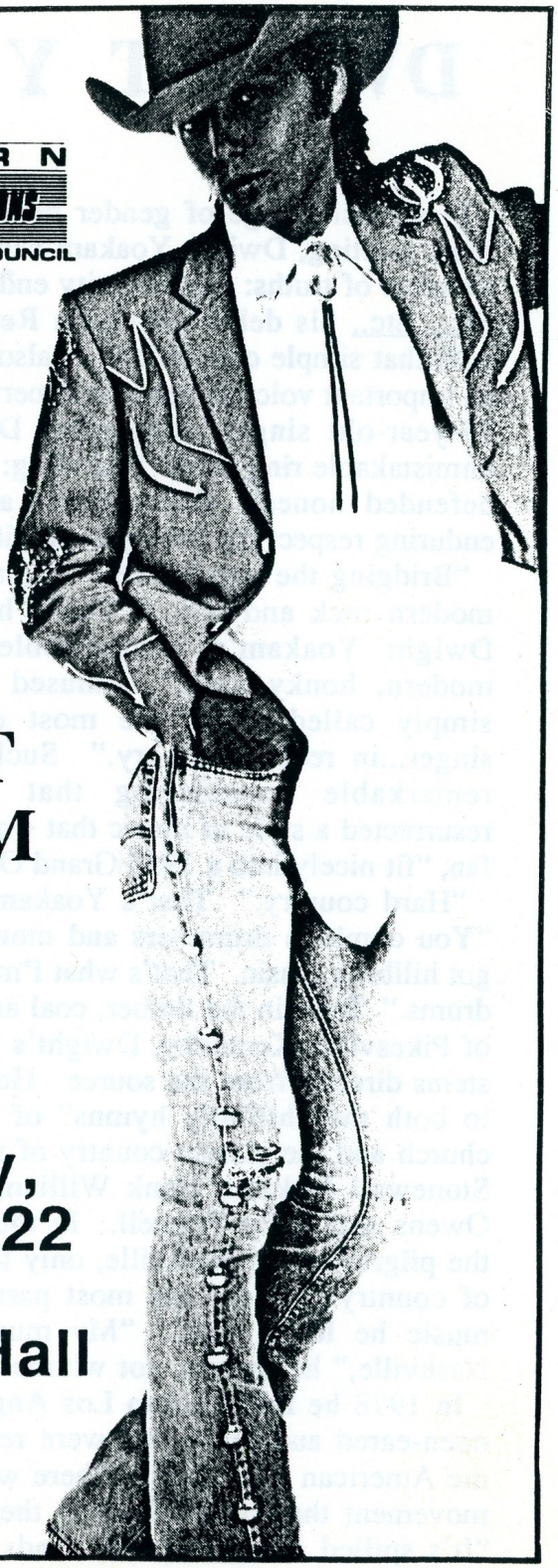

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DWIGHT YOAKAM

In a musical age of gender bending, style swapping and roots grafting, Dwight Yoakam has put us in touch with the simplest of truths: authenticity endures. Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc., his debut album on Reprise Records, resonates with that simple conviction. It also announces the arrival of an important voice in genuine American music. The music of 29-year-old singer, songwriter Dwight Yoakam has the unmistakable ring of the real thing: a hard won and fiercely defended honesty that reflects an abiding love and an enduring respect for the style and life of this country.

"Bridging the gap between traditional country music and modern rock and roll..." That's how one critic described Dwight Yoakam's hardscrabble sound. "Intelligent, modern, honky tonk," enthused another, while another simply called him "The most exciting young country singer...in recent memory." Such praise is all the more remarkable considering that Dwight Yoakam has resurrected a style of music that would, according to another fan, "fit nicely into a 1956 Grand Ole Opry program."

"Hard country." That's Yoakam's description-of-choice. "You combine drummers and mountain people and you've got hillbilly music. That's what I'm doing: Bill Monroe with drums." Born in the timber, coal and truck farming environs of Pikesville, Kentucky, Dwight's love for "hillbilly music" stems directly from the source. He spent his youth listening to both the "hillbilly hymns" of the local fundamentalist church and the classic country of such legendary singers as Stonewall Jackson, Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, Buck Owens and Lefty Frizzell. In the mid-Seventies he made the pilgrimage to Nashville, only to discover that the cradle of country had, for the most part, turned its back on the music he loved best. "My music was too country for Nashville," he asserts, not without a little pride.

In 1978 he relocated to Los Angelos seeking the kind of open-eared audiences that were rediscovering the music of the American heartland. "There was very definitely a roots movement that started here in the Seventies," he explains. "It's spilled over into other kinds of music and traditional country is one of them. I think it's an extension of kids exploring their roots."

Yoakam's own roots-exploration began attracting increasingly favorable attention in the city's thriving club scene, with bands like The Blasters, Los Lobos and Lone Justice helping to expand and enhance the appeal of authentic American sounds. "We put something out there and said, 'we'll see just how serious you are about this,'" explains Yoakam. "Well they showed up and proved they were very sincere..." Even more satisfying was the increasing numbers of long time country fans to these club and concert dates. "...Blue collar, middle-aged country fans come to see us because we represent something that's dying and a part of their heritage."

In fact, in Yoakam's capable hands, the music was hardly dying: it was undergoing a new and vital rebirth. In 1984 he released a critically-acclaimed EP on a local independent label. The record, which included "Ring of Fire" and such originals as "Miner's Prayer," "It Won't Hurt" and "South Of Cincinnati" served as the foundation for still wider exposure of Yoakam's died-in-the-wool music. The six cuts would, in time, be incorporated in his Reprise Records debut, Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.

Recorded in Los Angeles, Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc. was produced by Pete Anderson, Yoakam's longtime guitar player. It also features J.D. Foster on bass and backing vocals, Brantley Kearns, fiddle and backing vocals and Jeff Donavan on drums. Guest musicians include Glen D. Hardin and Gene Taylor on piano, pedal steel masters Jay Dee Maness and Ed Black and David Mansfield on mandolin and dobro. Maria McKee of Lone Justice guests on a duet titled "Bury Me."

The ten cuts on Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc. comprise the six originals from the 1984 EP along with four new cuts: the above mentioned "Bury Me," "Honky Tonk Man," "Heartached By The Number" and the title track.

"I'm proud of my heritage," concludes Dwight Yoakam, "and I have an obligation to my parents and grandparents who did not have the opportunities I have. I want to champion my people, mountain people. I got to where I am because someone crawled down a dirty black mine every day and I don't plan to forget that." On Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc. he has fashioned both an enduring testament to his heritage as well as powerful new chapter in that heritage.

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